

Adult Literacy Contact Centre NEWSLETTER

June 1993



Volume 6, Number 5

A project of the Adult Basic Education Association of B.C.

Look up "Learn" in the Yellow PagesTM

Yellow Pages directories across Canada will list literacy "hot-line" numbers on a special page for potential learners, when a national literacy promotion campaign gets underway later this year.

The "Learn Page" project is an initiative of ABC Canada, a national foundation promoting literacy in the private sector, and the Canadian Yellow Pages Service (CANYPS). ABC Canada has obtained a commitment from CANYPS to provide up to a full page to list not-for-profit literacy referral numbers in the Yellow Pages of the over 300 Canadian telephone directories, beginning this summer.

The Learn Page project is the "call to action" phase of a new national print, radio and television campaign, under development by ABC Canada, planned for the fall of 1993. The target audience for the campaign is adults with low literacy skills. ABC Canada wants such adults "to seek out learning opportunities as a result of the ads."

The "Learn Page" message will read: *Helping people learn to learn. Are you an adult who would like to improve your reading, writing or math? If so, call the number at the bottom of*

this page. There are people in your community willing to help. You'll soon discover that you're not alone.

According to ABC Canada, the media value of this donated advertising space is between three and four million dollars. The page is to appear initially for a period of one year at no charge to the referral organizations.

The ABC Canada project is administered by an advisory committee which includes representatives from:

- ❖ Canadian Advertising Foundation
- ❖ Canadian Library Association
- ❖ Harrod & Mirlin Advertising
- ❖ Laubach Literacy of Canada
- ❖ Movement for Canadian Literacy
- ❖ National Adult Literacy Database
- ❖ National Literacy Secretariat

In B.C., the Learn Page will appear courtesy of the B.C. Telephone Company, and the Adult Literacy Contact Centre toll-free number will be cited on the page in all directories.

The Learn Page will first appear in Yellow Pages for the Lower Mainland in August 1993, with

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directories for other B.C. regions to follow over the next six months.

For more information on the B.C. "Learn Page," contact:

Linda Hackett
Coordinator

Adult Literacy Contact Centre
622 - 510 West Hastings Street
Vancouver, B.C.

V6B 1L8

Phone: (Lower Mainland) 684-0624
(toll-free in B.C.) 1-800-663-1293

Fax: 684-8520 □

Co-op Housing Literacy Initiative

Three Lower Mainland housing cooperatives are participating in a pilot literacy project aimed at improving the ways co-op information is shared.

The Cooperative Housing Federation of B.C. (CHF/B.C.) began the project, called "Pathways to Participation," in January 1993. With funding from Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada, the project was designed to help co-ops make changes in their written and verbal communication systems.

CHF/B.C. is an organization which provides services to co-ops throughout B.C. in the areas of education, information, public relations, and financial services.

The project coordinator Dawn Lyons explains the reason for the project: "If co-op members don't have all the information they need to make a good decision, they cannot fully participate in a democratic co-operative process."

She says members with low literacy may not be able to read and understand co-op rules and policies (such as an occupancy agreement); the agenda, minutes, and other information related to co-op meetings; or newsletters and notices about co-op events and issues. They may also be reluctant to speak up at meetings to express their views and concerns, to volunteer for committees or other duties, or to tell others about something they don't understand.

"Pathways to Participation" involves three sites: Maya Co-op in Richmond; Four Sisters Co-op in Vancouver's downtown east side; and Killarney Gardens in east Vancouver. The Maya and Four Sisters Co-ops have a substantial immigrant population.

Lyons has been working with a steering committee of three to five members from each co-op to implement the project objectives. At all three co-ops, a combination of community meetings and membership surveys was used to determine needs and develop action plans.

Some of the activities planned by the co-ops are to:

- ❖ host a plain language workshop
- ❖ hold first-language discussion groups before each general meeting to review the agenda
- ❖ improve internal translation services
- ❖ write committee job descriptions in plain language
- ❖ train volunteers to teach ESL and literacy

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622 - 510 West Hastings Street
Vancouver, B.C. V6B 1L8

1-800-663-1293 Toll-free in B.C.

684-0624 Lower Mainland

684-8520 Facsimile

The Adult Literacy Contact Centre is a project of the Adult Basic Education Association of B.C. and is jointly funded by the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology; and the National Literacy Secretariat.

The Centre welcomes receiving your literacy news by phone, fax or mail. We reserve the right to edit written submissions for the newsletter.

The newsletter is published monthly (except as noted). It is available free of charge to any individual or agency upon request.



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- ❖ rewrite orientation materials for new members in plain language and supplement with discussion groups

Future plans by CHF/B.C. include the development of a resource library and a brochure on the impact of low literacy levels on co-op communities.

"Pathways to Participation" is scheduled to be completed by June 30, 1993, but CHF/B.C. plans to seek follow-up funding for the project.

For further information, contact:

Dawn Lyons
Project Coordinator
Pathways to Participation
Co-operative Housing Federation
of B.C.
4676 Main Street
Vancouver, B.C.
V5V 3R7
Phone: 879-5111
Fax: 879-4611 ☐

THE LITERACY MATERIALS BULLETIN

The spring 1993 edition of the *Literacy Materials Bulletin* features reviews of eleven materials, including *Women, Literacy and Action: A Handbook*, by the Ontario Literacy Coalition, which links literacy with such topics as visible minority women, health, parenting, and poverty. According to the *Bulletin* editor, "no other book has caused as lively and heated a discussion at a Literacy Materials Committee meeting."

The *Bulletin*, now in its fourth year, is the co-operative effort of a 10-member committee formed in 1989 to review and field-test literacy materials. The committee consists of instructors from fundamental level adult literacy programs around B.C.

Two new members of the committee are Iris Strong, literacy instructor, Malaspina College, Nanaimo, and Helen Thomas, a teacher with the Victoria READ Society.

Copies of the current issue as well as all seven issues to date are available on request from the Adult Literacy Contact Centre.

For information on the *Bulletin*, contact:

Laurie Gould, Chair
Literacy Materials Committee
c/o Basic Education Department
Vancouver Community College
King Edward Campus
1155 East Broadway
Vancouver, B.C.
V5T 1Y8
Phone: 871-7364
Fax: 871-7100 ☐

Change of Address

Moving? Please help us keep your *ALCC Newsletter* coming to you by filling out this form and returning it to us by mail or fax. (If possible, please send your old mailing label also.)

Name: _____ Job title: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

Postal code: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

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622 - 510 West Hastings Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6B 1L8 Fax: 684-8520

OLA Training Centre Meets Northern Needs

Adult basic education is part of a new workforce-oriented multimedia training facility recently opened in Prince George.

The facility, the Prince George Workplace Training Centre, is managed by the provincial government's Open Learning Agency (OLA). The OLA works with B.C.'s universities, colleges, institutes, school districts, businesses, and community and government agencies to provide open learning programs and services.

The Workplace Training Centre offers programs in basic skills, trades, technical subjects, management and professional development. The programs are for adults who are sponsored by employers, unions, professional associations and other agencies in the region.

The Centre held its official opening ceremony on May 28, 1993, although adult upgrading classes have been available at the Centre since May 3, 1993.

The 5,600 square foot facility is located in the Camp Plaza shopping centre.

The Centre is funded by Employment and Immigration

Canada (Prince George office) and the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology. It is currently staffed by three OLA employees.

The facility features interactive training labs, teleconferencing facilities, and a video-conferencing room. One of the labs is equipped with 15 networked "training stations" to provide basic skills upgrading for high school completion using the Jostens INVEST learning program. The mobile IBM work stations can also be transferred to worksite locations throughout the region.

The basic skills program is jointly conducted by the Prince George School District No. 57, the OLA and the Prince George Canada Employment Centre.

The instructor, Frank Costello, teaches reading, writing and mathematics up to the Grade 10 level at the Centre, and students can continue their Grade 11 and 12 (to complete the Ministry of Education "Dogwood" certificate) through the local school district continuing education program.

Approximately forty students are currently enrolled in the basic skills program.

Future plans for the Centre include the establishment of a Prince George-based steering committee to ensure the Centre remains responsive to labour market needs in the region.

For further information, contact:

Douglas Campbell
Manager
Workplace Training Centre
1445 Tenth Avenue
Prince George, B.C.
V2L 2L2
Phone: 563-0185
Fax: 561-3757 ☐

Literacy Project Bears Fruit

The final report of a project designed to assist B.C. fruit growers to become certified in the safe and effective use of pesticides was recently released by the British Columbia Fruit Growers' Association (BCFGA). Growers whose level of skill in language, literacy and numeracy put them at risk of being unable to prepare for and pass the certification examination, participated in the project.

The BCFGa initiated the project in 1990 in response to provincial legislation, effective as of January 1992, requiring anyone who buys, mixes, or applies restricted pesticides to obtain a pesticide applicators' certificate.

The project was developed and administered by the BCFGa Industrial Adjustment Service (IAS) pesticide certification

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committee. Funding was provided through the IAS program of Employment and Immigration Canada and the B.C. Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology.

Key people within the fruit industry, such as packinghouse managers and fieldmen, assisted the project by participating in the identification and instruction of at-risk growers.

A needs assessment conducted in January 1991 among over 2,400 growers in the Okanagan, Similkameen and Kootenay valleys indicated that as many as 1,100 growers were at risk of being unable to pass the pesticide applicators' examination without some kind of support, and that at least 343 growers were seriously at-risk unless considerable assistance and an alternative certification process were available.

The needs assessment established that the existing certification training manual was written at between a ninth and tenth grade reading level: higher than the level of schooling completed by 27% of the growers. The focus of the problem for most at-risk growers was identified as the fact that English was not their first language, but the needs assessment also found that some native English speakers could not meet the manual's

requirements for skill in numeracy and literacy.

The needs assessment identified as well feelings among the growers of "fear, apprehension and hostility" towards the new legislation which, according to the report, "constituted a genuine threat to the certification program."

The report outlines the methods used to identify growers requiring assistance and describes how the project developed alternatives to the regular certification training and examination procedures to meet these growers' needs. The adjustments made included:

- ◆ The preparation of new course materials and teaching aids written in basic language and focussing on the essential components of the certification program.
- ◆ The use of instructors who were specially selected and trained by the project to recognize and assist with the particular problems experienced by at-risk growers.
- ◆ The provision for one-on-one tutorial instruction and the organization of classes based on proficiency in English and grower need, in venues familiar to the growers.
- ◆ The revision of the regular written examination by employing more basic language; extending the time limit; allowing for the use of interpreters; and allowing examinees to ask clarifying questions of examination supervisors.

- ◆ The introduction of an oral/ demonstration examination, with or without the use of interpreters, in lieu of the written examination.

The report indicates that 401 at-risk growers achieved certification through participation in the project. Evaluations of the project, conducted at its conclusion by the IAS committee and an external agency, found that "although many growers said the process...was extremely stressful" their "confidence and interest in further training [was] increased" and "most now have a more favourable attitude toward the legislation."

The report recommends that a permanent Education Committee be struck to "focus on the setting up of a structure to meet the educational needs of growers. This structure must be grower-centered so that the needs are those identified by growers."

For further information, and a copy of the report, contact:

Don Marson, Chairperson
Pesticide Certification Committee
B.C. Fruit Growers' Association
1473 Water Street
Kelowna, B.C.
V1Y 1J6
Phone: 762-5226
Fax: 861-9089 □

PLGV Resurfaces

A meeting of Project Literacy Greater Vancouver (PLGV) was held in April 1993 for the first time in two years.

PLGV previously existed as a networking and advocacy organization which held monthly meetings from 1989 to 1991. In 1990 it joined the newly constituted Literacy B.C. coalition of regional literacy groups. Although it remained incorporated as a society, PLGV ceased to function actively in May 1991.

Literacy B.C. initiated a meeting in March 1993 to discuss the possibility of reviving PLGV. Those who attended decided that PLGV should be revitalized and an interim steering committee was formed to begin this process. The steering committee, consisting of Thomas Quigley, Librarian, Vancouver Public Library, and Tanya Northcott, Principal, Pathfinder Learning Systems Corporation, New Westminster, called a meeting of PLGV for April 30, 1993 at the Vancouver Public Library, Central Branch.

Twenty people, representing community colleges, libraries, government, non-profit agencies, and the private sector, attended the meeting and shared ideas regarding possible

directions in purpose and activity for the new organization. At a subsequent meeting on May 28, a statement of purpose was developed: "PLGV is the forum for a broad-based community network that deals with literacy issues in the Greater Vancouver area."

PLGV will meet on the last Friday of every month in the morning. The next meeting, at which time a new three-person steering committee will be formed, will take place:

June 25, 1993
9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.
Westcoast English Language
Centre
Suite 550 - 220 Cambie Street
Vancouver, B.C.

For further information about PLGV, contact:

Thomas Quigley, Librarian
Language and Literature Division
Vancouver Public Library
Central Branch
750 Burrard Street
Vancouver, B.C.
V6Z 1X5
Phone: 665-3594
Fax: 665-2265 ☐

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Charley's Cartoons. Charley Adam. Project Literacy Kelowna Society (1993).

This collection of cartoons was produced by a Project Literacy Kelowna tutor. All proceeds from sales (at \$5.00 per copy) will go to the Project Literacy Kelowna Society.

Contact:

Project Literacy Kelowna Society
#14 - 1304 Ellis Street
Kelowna, B.C.
V1Y 1Z8
Phone: 762-2163

Training Adult Literacy Tutors in a Small Community in British Columbia. Literacy Kitimat. The Kitimat Community Services Society (1993).

The training given to Literacy Kitimat's volunteer tutors is described in this 32-page spiral-bound text. It was produced as a 1991/92 B.C. literacy cost-shared project.

Copies are available for a \$5.00 donation from:

Kitimat Community Services
Society
#310 - 370 City Centre
Kitimat, B.C.
V8C 1T6
Phone: 632-3139
Fax: 632-3368